RKO GENERAL LICENSING MESS

1. BACKGROUND: OVERVIEW OF RKO PICTURES

Before we look at the broadcasting arm of RKO General and the dominoes toppled; let's look at the beginning of RKO Radio Pictures. It began in 1928 as a subsidiary of Radio-Keith-Orpheum Corporation and was founded by RCA founder David Sarnoff - also the founder of NBC - who created the company in order to have a client of RCA's sound-on-film system, called Photophone, that had been developed by parent company General Electric. However, each of the existing Hollywood studios taking an interest in moving from silent to sound films (Warner Bros., whose "The Jazz Singer" the previous year was the first feature-length "talkie"; Fox Film {eventually merged with 20th Century Pictures to form 20th Century Fox, now 20th Century Studios}; Paramount; Loew's/MGM; Universal and First National either were already or were soon to contract with ERPI, part of AT&T's Western Electric division); with Radio-Keith-Orpheum (owner of a number of theaters for the dying live vaudeville format) serving as a holding company that had already absorbed the U.S. division of Pathe and Film Booking Offices of America, a studio having been headed by a man with a familiar last name in American politics: Joseph P. Kennedy, patriarch of the Kennedy political family that produced Senators Robert and Ted Kennedy and President John F. Kennedy, officially created effective on October 23, 1928 (Kennedy would soon back out of his

executive roles and keeping Pathe separate from RKO); with a production arm launched in January 1929 under former FBO vice-president Joseph I. Schnitzel, eventually filing for the Radio Pictures trademark. Joseph Kennedy would eventually sell Pathe - complete with the newsreel operation, contract players and the studios and backlot in Culver City, CA (later used for films such as the 1937 version of “A Star is Born” and 1939’s “Gone with the Wind” and TV series ranging from The Andy Griffith Show, Lassie and Batman to The Nanny, Scrubs and Arrested Development; currently owned by Hackman Capital Partners) - to RKO; with the merger becoming finalized on January 29, 1931.

Owing to the Radio Pictures park of the name, in 1929 RKO began cranking out musicals to take advantage of the new sound technology; starting with “Street Girl” (the first official RKO production and the first shot in Hollywood) and their first big hit, “Rio Rita” while adding a facility that eventually would becoming the RKO Encino Movie Ranch and increasing the number of films from 12 in 1929 to 29 by 1930. However, by that time the Great Depression had set in and the moviegoing public began backing away temporarily from musicals, forcing a drop in musical films from 60 in 1929 and over 80 the next year to 11 by 1931. Additionally, this led to RKO scrapping a planned project called Radio Revels, planned to be filmed entirely in

Technicolor (RKO eventually produced two all-Technicolor, non-musical projects in 1931's The Runaround and Fanny Foley Herself to complete their contract with Technicolor). In spite of the Depression, RKO was still spending rather freely, gobbling up theaters left and right while buying a 50% share of the Van Beuren studio (known mainly for animation and live shorts) while cranking out films such as 1931's "Cimarron" (the only RKO movie to win a Best Picture Oscar). October 1931 saw the biggest change yet when William LeBaron, the studio's production chief and who produced "Cimarron", was axed in favor of 29-year-old David Selznick; who brought in personnel such as director George Cukor and producer/director Merian Cooper while instituting unit production that gave greater independence to film producers and also saved 30%-40% on costs while discovering a young Katherine Hepburn and moving headquarters to the RKO Building on the Rockefeller Center property. The Pathe name was largely retired save for newsreels and documentaries. Selznick - just 15 months later - would quit in a dispute with new corporate president Merlin Aylesworth; though not before approving a screen test for a balding, 33 year old Fred Astaire and green lighting "A Bill of Divorcement" (Katherine Hepburn's debut, directed by Cukor) and 1933's "King Kong".

However, the continued effects of the Great Depression and the

financial problems from the studio's early years resulted in RKO falling into receivership in early 1933; from which it would not emerge until 1940. However, Selznick's replacement as production head; Merlan Cooper, began making a series of aggressive moves such as greenlighting the first two films featuring the aforementioned Katherine Hepburn: 1933's "Morning Glory" (which netted Hepburn a Best Actress Oscar) and "Little Women" - both directed by George Cukor. Also greenlit during this time was "Flying Down to Rio"; the first of a series of musicals starring Fred Astaire alongside Ginger Rogers that included later musicals such as 1934's "The Gay Divorcee" - careful with the jokes here - and 1935's "Top Hat"; 1934's "The Richest Girl in the World" (considered one of the first screwball comedies) and "Of Human Bondage" (the first hit for Bette Davis); 1935's "The Informer" (which netted a Best Actor award for Victor McLaglen and Best Director for John Ford; the only film for the studio to win the latter honor) and "Becky Sharp", which though a critical flop gained attention for the technical advancement as the first feature film shot completely in three-strip Technicolor. By October 1935; the studio - which now included Floyd Odlum leading a group that had acquired half of RCA's stake and members of the Rockefeller family began taking a more active role. In addition to Hepburn, other stars began to emerge with the studio such as Cary Grant, Barbara Stanwyck and Ann Sothern.

1936 saw Samuel Briskin take over as production chief and the biggest move yet, as RKO entered a distribution deal with Walt Disney's firm - with the first release under the nearly 20-year agreement being the Mouse House's first feature, 1937's "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs"; which became the highest grossing film released between 1915's "The Birth of a Nation" and 1939's "Gone With the Wind". 1938 saw Katherine Hepburn's final release with the studio "Bringing Up Baby" flop at the time - though the movie later became viewed as a classic "screwball" film and Hepburn's seemingly stalled career would revive two years later with "The Philadelphia Story" while former studio head Selznick entered a long-term lease of the RKO Culver City studio and Forty Acres backlot; where he co-produced "Gone With the Wind" while RKO was centered mainly around its central Hollywood studio and Encino ranch locations.

In a seemingly endless string of turnover at the top; Briskin gave way to Pandro Berman, who oversaw three 1939 releases in "Gunga Din" (starring Cary Grant and Victor McLaglen); "Love Affair" (featuring Irene Dunne and Charles Boyer) and "The Hunchback of Notre Dame" (starring Charles Laughton as Quasimodo in what was considered one of his finest performances and the American film debut of Irish-born actress Maureen O'Hara) while also releasing B Westerns (usually featuring George O'Brien), the Simon Templar series of B detective

movies, "The Flying Deuces" (a rare non-Hal Roach produced Laurel and Hardy project) and the Mexican Spitfire series starring Lupe Velez and Leon Errol. However, Berman was ousted by the end of 1939 after disputes with studio president George J. Schaefer; who had the support of the Rockefellers and David Sarnoff; with Schaefer - though others were nominal studio heads - effectively running production under the slogan "Quality Pictures at a Premium Price" and shifting focus to distribution of independent producers.

2. CITIZEN KANE

We left off with a reference to RKO shifting to focusing on distribution of independent projects. Chief among the independent producers were Samuel Goldwyn, who had previously co-founded the Famous Players-Lasky Corporation (eventually merged into Paramount) and Goldwyn Pictures (later merged into Metro Pictures Corporation to form Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer; or MGM) before starting the Samuel Goldwyn Productions company; which had its films distributed during

the 1930s by United Arists (later to merge with MGM; a company whose roots traced to the aforementioned Goldwyn Pictures) and made Goldwyn the preeminent independent producer, involved in films such as 1931's "Arrowsmith" (directed by John Ford; nominated for Best Picture) and 1937's "The Hurricane" along with the William Wyler-helmed "Dodsworth" (1936); "Dead End" (1937) and "Wuthering Heights" (1939); all of which were nominated for Best Picture. The Goldwyn hot streak would continue as RKO succeeded United Artists as its distributor; with the first two films produced by Goldwyn's firm being "The Little Foxes" (directed by Wyler, based on the Lillian Hellman novel of the same name and starring Bette Davis - on loan from Warner Bros.; which ended up with 9 Oscar nominations, including Best Picture; Best Director for Wyler; Best Actress for Davis and Best Screenplay for Hellman); while the Howard Hawks directed "Ball of Fire" (featuring Gary Cooper and RKO veteran Barbara Stanwyck; who was also nominated for Best Actress and whose publicity photo for the movie was popular with U.S. soldiers during World War II).

However, George Schaefer - in negotiating with Sam Goldwyn - committed a critical error in that the terms of the negotiation were so favorable to Goldwyn that despite "The Little Foxes" and "Ball of Fire" being hits, RKO ended up losing money on those pictures. Elsewhere at

RKO; the studio managed to secure the services of director Alfred Hitchcock (on loan from David O. Selznick, himself briefly a former RKO production chief who later worked for MGM and started his own firm, Selznick International, which saw 1939's "Gone With the Wind" and 1940's "Rebecca" {the latter directed by Hitchcock} win Best Picture Academy Awards) for 1941's "Mr. & Mrs. Smith" (starring Robert Montgomery and Carole Lombard in the last film released before she was killed in a 1942 plane crash while on a tour promoting the sale of war bonds; this was also the only pure comedy directed by Hitchcock) and "Suspicion" (starring Cary Grant and Joan Fontaine; with Fontaine winning Best Actress, the only Oscar-winning performance for a Hitchcock film).

Then came Orson Welles. In 1939; the 24-year-old - fresh off the success of "Mercury Theatre" on Broadway and the iconic 1938 radio broadcast "The War of the Worlds" - signed a contract with RKO, with his first project being "Citizen Kane"; which Welles not only starred in but also wrote the screenplay (alongside Herman J. Mankiewicz); produced and directed with near-total control, unheard of for a newcomer in Hollywood. Also, in addition to Welles; most of the main actors were movie newcomers such as Joseph Cotten; Dorothy Comingore; Agnes Moorehead; Ruth Warrick; Ray Collins and Everett Sloane. However, while the movie would be one of the most critically-

acclaimed motion pictures in history; the film flopped at the box office - though this was less anything about the film itself and more to do with Welles having drawn the ire of newspaper tycoon William Randolph Hearst.

It started when a select group of writers from magazines such as "Life" and "Redbook" were invited to see a rough cut in January 1941 in advance of its official world premiere on Valentine's Day. Most of the critics invited spoke well of Welles' film; but gossip columnist Hedda Hopper - who had not been invited but managed to get in - wrote a scathing review that called the film "[a] vicious and irresponsible attack on a great man". Furthermore; Hopper's arch-rival in gossip columnists, Louella Parsons (who worked for the Hearst-owned Los Angeles Examiner) got caught in the crossfire when Friday magazine published an article making extensive comparisons between Hearst and Welles' own Charles Foster Kane character while claiming Welles led Parsons on, including a quote that Welles supposedly said that Parsons should "wait until the woman finds out that the picture's about her boss." Welles immediately denied saying that and the editor of Friday admitted the quote might be false, but by the time that statement was made Hearst blasted Parsons in a letter complaining about finding about "Citizen Kane" from Hopper instead of Parsons. In return, Parsons demanded a private screening and went on to threaten

George Schaefer on Hearst's behalf with a lawsuit and later with a vague threat of consequences for everyone in Hollywood (keep in mind this was just shy of a decade after the institution of the Hays Code instituted in an effort to clean up Hollywood's image after a series of scandals and controversial films during the 1920s and early 1930s).

January 10 saw Parsons and two of Hearst's lawyers receive a private screening, though Parsons according to witness walked out. Soon after, Parsons made good on her threat to sue RKO; demanded that the RKO-owned Radio City Music Hall theater not premiere the film. Next; Hearst issued a ban on advertisements of RKO's films, starting with "Kitty Foyle" - though after two weeks the ban was lifted for every RKO film except "Citizen Kane". When Schaefer refused; Parsons threatened to expose the private lives of a number of people associated with the film. Chief among them was the recently divorced Welles himself, who was involved in a rendezvous with Mexican actress Dolores del Rio - who wanted the affair kept out of the headlines until her own divorce from art director Cedric Gibbons was finalized. Despite public denials by Welles that "Citizen Kane" was about William Randolph Hearst; Hearst continued with plans for an injunction on libel and invasion of privacy counts, though Welles' lawyers doubted that the newspaper magnate would want to go through the negative publicity...or be required to testify in court.

Meanwhile; the January 13, 1941 edition of "The Hollywood Reporter" published a front-page story on how Hearst was preparing to run a series of editorials criticizing the major studios for hiring immigrants for jobs that could be filled by American citizens (much like the long-running current dispute on the issue of illegal immigration) - many of whom had fled Europe as the spectre of war loomed following the rise of Hitler and Mussolini - as a thinly-veiled attempt to intimidate RKO into pulling "Kane". Schaefer was then approached by Nicholas Schenck, who ran the parent company of MGM, offering on behalf of Louis B. Mayer and other Hollywood executives to pay RKO $805,000 (over $15.8 million in 2022 dollars) in cash to destroy all prints and burn the negatives. RKO's lawyers reassured Schaefer that no such action would take place; and on January 21 it was announced that "Kane" would be released as planned - and with one of the studio's heaviest promotional campaigns while bringing Welles to the Big Apple for a private screening with the corporate studio heads and attorneys, with no objections to a release provided that Welles remove or soften specific references that might anger Hearst. Welles did, trimming the film from 122 to 119 minutes.

However, despite another screening for the press in March that led to still more positive reviews - in particular Time magazine founder

Henry Luce, who wanted to pay RKO $1 million to distribute the film himself. Time would note that Hearst's objections were particularly ironic given that he built his empire on sensationalism (for instance, his sensationalized reporting of atrocities by Spain in Cuba - capped by the sinking of the USS Maine - that contributed heavily to the eventual Spanish-American War in 1898). Undeterred, Hearst then managed to pressure many theaters to not show the film while spreading rumors during Welles' production of "Native Son" on Broadway claiming Welles was a Communist and even going so far as to attempt a setup to smear Welles - who would later disclose that a police officer during a lecture tour advised him not to go to his hotel, with it later being discovered that a 14-year-old girl was hidden in a closet while two photographers were waiting (suggesting that Hearst was possibly willing to frame Welles on false pedophilia charges); but by the time it was finally released to the general public in May 1941, the film did modestly well at the box office (the 6th highest grossing film of the year) but under expectations. Furthermore, of the 9 Academy Awards "Citizen Kane" was nominated for (including "Best Picture"; Orson Welles being nominated for "Best Director" and "Best Actor" in addition to "Best Original Screenplay" {sharing the last with Herman J. Mankiewicz}; "Best Cinematography - Black and White" and "Best Film Editing"; the film only won for "Best Original Screenplay").

3. POST-KANE: THE HOWARD HUGHES REIGN OF ERROR AND MERGER WITH GENERAL TIRE

After surviving the hostile battle with Hearst over "Citizen Kane"; RKO found itself in a familiar position, losing money and about to experience another change at the top. In addition to "Kane"; RKO had contracted Orson Welles to produce "The Magnificent Ambersons" and a documentary titled "It's All True". The former - with much of the same cast as "Citizen Kane" - ran into some of the same problems as "Kane" (without Hearst's interference); namely while well-received by critics was over budget, losing $620,000 due to expenses and with no Oscars while the film itself had its run time slashed from 131 minutes to 88, with RKO proceeding to destroy the cut footage (years later,

Welles expressed an interest in trying to recreate the cut footage using “Ambersons” surviving cast). "It's All True" was a documentary that RKO collaborated with the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs (a division formed in 1941 by FDR under his Executive Order 8840; with the department chaired by future New York Governor and Vice-President Nelson Rockefeller - whose family still had a sizable amount of influence at RKO at this point and who was himself on RKO's board of directors); only for RKO to halt production (Welles later speculated the film was being used as a tax write-off, later joking that RKO "...could have made a bad musical out of just the nightclub footage") with much of the negatives being dumped into the Pacific while some other footage eventually was reused as stock footage.

This came during a turbulent period for RKO; as in addition to the Welles films failing to meet expectations, RKO was in significant financial trouble, losing $2 million on the Welles productions after finishing $1 million in the red for 1940 and making a profit of just $500,000 in 1941. Additionally; several other films from the studio flopped while their lone remaining star signed to an exclusive deal, Ginger Rogers - having won an Oscar for her role in "Kitty Foyle" - held out in hopes she, like Cary Grant before her, could get a freelance contract (Rogers would make only one more appearance in an RKO project; 1956's "The First Traveling Saleslady").

Something had to give, and on June 17, 1942; George Schaefer took the fall and announced his resignation as studio president. Soon afterwards; Atlas Corporation - an investment firm owned by Floyd Odlum - took over RKO (with the Rockefeller family and RCA founder David Sarnoff divesting their stock by the end of 1943); with former RKO theater chain head Charles Koerner being promoted to the top job after a brief interim period with Joseph Breen as studio head before Breen returned to his previous job enforcing the Hays Code. Among Koerner's first actions was terminating the contract with Orson Welles (who jokingly said "Don't worry, boys. We're just passing a bad Koerner.") while shifting the studio away from producing artistic projects in favor of crowd pleasers (RKO's slogan at this time: "Showmanship in Place of Genius: A New Deal at RKO"), and by 1943 profits rose from $736,241 in 1942 (with the theatrical division being the reason RKO didn't finish the year in the red with the studio's $2.34 million deficit) to $6.96 million in the black for 1943.

By 1944, RKO became the first studio to create a division to handle television production. Named RKO Television Corporation; the first production was "Talk Fast, Mister" - produced at the RKO-Pathe studio in New York and airing the week before Christmas 1944 on WABD-TV 5 (the Big Apple's DuMont station; later independent WNEW

and now FOX flagship WNYW); followed by partnering with Mexican businessman Emilio Azcarraga Vidaurreta to form Estudios Churubusco in Mexico City the following year.

In the meantime; RKO began beefing up their roster to supplement Cary Grant and Maureen O'Hara - neither of whom were signed to an exclusive deal (Grant also working with Columbia and O'Hara being shared with 20th Century FOX). The RKO strategy would see a number of arrangements made with other studios to loan out their big stars and/or sign freelancers to short-form "pay or play" agreements; thus allowing RKO to obtain the services of Bing Crosby; Henry Fonda and others that they couldn't afford for extended deals. 1943 saw John Wayne - then on loan from Republic Pictures - appear in RKO's "A Lady Takes a Chance"; the first of 10 films by RKO to feature the Duke. Gary Cooper would appear in a number of Samuel Goldwyn-produced RKO releases as well as RKO collaborations with start-up International Pictures. Claudette Colbert also appeared in several co-productions for RKO. Ingrid Bergman would join Bing Crosby in 1945's "The Bells of St. Mary" (a sequel to Crosby's "Going My Way"), produced alongside director Leo McCarey's Rainbow Productions and which proved to be the studio's biggest hit, making a $3.7 million profit. 1946 saw Ingrid Bergman return for "Notorious" (directed by Alfred Hitchcock); one of three films co-produced or distributed by RKO

alongside 1948's "Joan of Arc" and 1950's "Stromboli"; while freelancer Randolph Scott managed to work in an RKO release each year between 1943-48. RKO would distribute Orson Welles' 1946 release "The Stranger" (which Welles dismissed as his worst film but the only one to make a profit on its first run).

Late in 1946; RKO released "It's a Wonderful Life". Helmed by Frank Capra and featuring James Stewart, Donna Reed and Lionel Barrymore in the main roles, would be recognized as one of Hollywood's greatest films and a Christmas classic despite losing over half a million dollars in its first run. RKO, more than the bigger studios, also relied much more heavily on B-movies that had little in terms of plot or budget but could make a quick profit - with RKO's B unit focused mainly on film noirs such as 1940's "Stranger on the Third Floor"; 1945's "Johnny Angel"; 1946's "Nocturne" and 1947's A-budget noir "Out of the Past"; with noir regulars such as Robert Ryan, Robert Mitchum; Gloria Grahame; Jane Greer and Lawrence Tierney signed to the studio while freelancer George Raft starred in "Johnny Angel" and "Nocturne".

Elsewhere, 1946 saw the release of "The Best Years of Our Lives"; which starred Myrna Loy, Fredric March, Harold Russell, Virginia Mayo, Dana Andrews and Teresa Wright while directed by William

Wyler. This film - released one month before "It's a Wonderful Life" - would be the highest grossing release since "Gone with the Wind" (though, as per usual, the distribution deal with Samuel Goldwyn meant RKO wound up losing $660,000) while winning Oscars for Best Picture; Best Director; Best Actor; Supporting Actor (Harold Russell; who was not an actor but had lost both of his hands on June 6, 1944 - better known for that day's D-Day invasion - when a defective fuse detonated explosives he was handling while teaching demolition work with the 13th Airborne Division at Camp Mackall; where Russell was stationed as an Army instructor); Screenplay; Film Editing; Scoring of a Dramatic or Comedy Picture and the Irving G. Thalberg Memorial Award (an infrequently awarded prize for producers "...whose bodies of work reflect a consistently high quality of motion picture production").

However; not all was well by the end of World War II. First; Charles Koerner - who had overseen RKO's return to profitability - had died in February 1946 from leukemia at the age of just 49. After Radio-Keith-Orpheum president Peter Rathvon and RKO Radio Pictures president Ned Depinet swapped jobs pending an official replacement; on New Year's Day 1947 Dore Schary; a producer and Oscar-winning screenwriter, took the job. Foreign revenues were soon slashed following the British government imposing a 75% tax on foreign films. Meanwhile; the silver screen found itself competing with a new

medium: Television. All the studios saw profits fall 27% between 1946-47. Additionally; by October 1947 the House Un-American Activities Committee began its hearings following reports of Communist infiltration into the movie business; and two of RKO's biggest names - director Edward Dmytryk and producer Adrian Scott - were caught in the crosshairs. The duo refused to cooperate with HUAC; which had devastating effects on their careers as RKO - per the "Waldorf Statement" designed to eliminate any "subversives" - quickly fired them; with Scott and Dmytryk becoming two members of the "Hollywood Ten" that ended up being blacklisted (incidentally; RKO's biggest 1947 hit, "Crossfire", was a Scott-Dmytryk production). Dmytryk would not be hired by another studio until he decided to name names to the HUAC committee in 1951; while Scott - who Dmytryk testified in his 1951 testimony pressured him into adding Communist propaganda to his films - would in 1963 be hired as a production executive for MGM-British but would not be credited under his own name for another two decades until the production of "The Great Man's Whiskers"; a 1972 NBC made-for-TV film (which Scott had been planning to make a version of for RKO before he was blacklisted) just over 7 months before Scott's death on Christmas Day 1972 from lung cancer. Floyd Odium sold his remaining shares - roughly 25% of the stock - while RKO sold the Pathe-brand newsreel division to Warner Brothers. 1947 also saw "The Father's Daughter" - a collaboration with

Vanguard Films (headed by ex-RKO chief David Selznick) - which netted Loretta Young the Best Actress Oscar; the last major Academy Award for RKO.

1948 would see the biggest change yet to RKO with aviation tycoon/sometimes filmmaker Howard Hughes buy out the shares that had been held by Odium - beating out British film magnate J. Arthur Rank - paying over $8.825 million. However; Hughes slashed production from 30 films to 9, fired 700 employees and saw production head Schary and Rathvon quickly exit almost immediately after Hughes shelved or outright canceled a number of the "message films" Schary backed and once filming began Hughes began meddling on minute details; specifically how the actresses looked (this was, after all, the same Hughes whose film "The Outlaw" spent nearly all of its marketing focusing on the voluptuous figure of then-unknown actress Jane Russell; causing wrangling with the Hays Code that delayed the film by nearly 3 years). Result: While the Big Five studios saw profits fall again for 1948 (for instance; 20th Century Fox's fell 11% while Loew's/MGM plummeted 62%); RKO suffered a whopping 90% decline in profits; with the production-distribution side of things plunged into debt so deeply that they never emerged in the black again.

Worse news that year included RKO's most prominent young

star, Robert Mitchum, being arrested and ultimately convicted of marijuana possession. Despite a 2-month jail sentence, Hughes - to the shock of many - announced that he was standing by the embattled actor and his contract was not in jeopardy. Hughes would then make RKO the first of the studios to settle an antitrust suit with the federal government following the Supreme Court's 7-1 (one justice, Robert H. Jackson, abstained) ruling in the U.S. v. Paramount Pictures case ruling that the major studio practice of block booking and ownership of theater chains constituted trade practices that were anti-competitive and monopolistic; effectively marking the beginning of the end of the traditional "studio system" in Hollywood. In Hughes' settlement, this effectively meant the end of the original Radio-Keith-Orpheum parent company while splitting RKO's production-distribution business and theater chain into two separate companies (RKO Pictures; RKO Theaters, respectively) with one of the two being sold (Hughes would delay the procedure until December 1950; but held onto his stock in the theater company until 1953).

Meanwhile; RKO production chiefs Sid Rogell and Sam Bischoff left the company out of frustration over Hughes' meddling. Among the films released was the surprise B noir "The Window" and the Robert Wise-directed "The Set-Up" (both 1949; the latter - starring Robert Ryan - won the Critic's Prize at the Cannes Film Festival). 1951's "The

Thing from Another World" (co-produced with Winchester Pictures, the studio run by Howard Hawks) would become a sci-fi classic. The following year saw 2 Fritz Lang directed films, "Rancho Notorious" and "Clash by Night" (co-produced by Jerry Wald and Norman Krasna; who jumped ship from Warner Brothers in 1950).

Despite the chaotic reign of the increasingly eccentric Hughes; RKO was willing to make some bold moves for its time. Among them partnering with Ida Lupino; who co-starred with RKO regular Robert Ryan in two 1952 releases: the Nicholas Ray-directed "On Dangerous Ground" and "Beware, My Lovely" (the latter co-produced by RKO and Lupino's company "The Filmakers"). Additionally, Lupino was the only female director in Hollywood during this time, directing 3 of the 5 Filmakers projects alongside RKO; most famously 1953's "The Hitch-Hiker". The early 1950s saw RKO's last smash hits released during this period; both of which were distributed for two studios that RKO had longtime connections with: 1952's "Hans Christian Andersen" (with Samuel Goldwyn Pictures) and 1953's "Peter Pan" (with Disney).

Still more clouds were gathering by this time; as early in 1952 Hughes ended up having to fend off a lawsuit by screenwriter Paul Jarrico, whose writing credit was removed by "The Las Vegas Story" (starring Jane Russell) after being embroiled in the HUAC hearings on

suspicion of being a Communist which led to Jarrico being blacklisted after refusing to testify despite a subpoena; with Hughes following up by placing over 100 employees on a "leave of absence" to allow the setup of a "security office". While Hughes vowed that "the work of Communist sympathizers will not be used"; the rapid expungment of credits lead to speculation as to whether Hughes was trying to slash production and expenses under the guise of tracking down subversives. By that September, Hughes and corporate president Ned E. Depinet sold their studio stock to a Chicago-based syndicate; only for that syndicate - unfamiliar with showbiz - to make even more of a mess of things before Hughes regained control in February 1953.

By that time, however, RKO lost $10 million for 1952 while having made only 1 in-house production during the Chicago syndicate era. After 11 years; Samuel Goldwyn would end his distribution deal with RKO, with the Wald-Krasna team exiting as well after 2 and a half years and just 4 films (the deal that brought them to RKO called for them to produce 60 features in a 5-year span). Additionally, RKO sold off the Encino ranch property (eventually becoming the Encino Village subdivision) in 1953; the same year Hughes - in November - unloaded the RKO Theaters stock; which was acquired by Albert A. List, who renamed it List Industries. Soon after; at least five lawsuits were filed by minority shareholders against Hughes, accusing him of malfeasance

in his dealings with the Chicago group and general mismanagement (actor Dick Powell, who was arriving to direct a handful of projects for RKO around the time of the legal wrangling, joked that the list of people on RKO's contract was "down to three actors and 127 lawyers").

1954 saw Hughes - attempting to avoid a courtroom battle - offering to buy out RKO's other stockholders; but that year saw the embattled studio lose the other major distribution deal when Walt Disney - engaged in a dispute over the distribution of his "True-Life Adventures" nature documentaries and doubtful of RKO's future - ended his arrangement to start Buena Vista Pictures Distribution Inc., with 1955's "Lady and the Tramp" being the first Disney project distributed in-house at the Magic Kingdom. By 1954's end; Hughes had managed to get near-complete control of RKO (the first virtual sole owner of a studio since the early days of Hollywood), only for Floyd Odlum to re-enter the picture; as Hughes had reneged on a promise to give Odlum first opportunity to buy the RKO theater chain, and Odlum's revenge saw him work to block Hughes from acquiring 95 percent of RKO stock, which had Hughes succeeded would have let him write off the company's losses against his earnings in other ventures.

Enter General Tire and Rubber Company. With Hughes and Odlum locked into an impasse over RKO, General Tire emerged as a

possible buyer. General Tire had been involved in broadcasting since 1943; when it picked up controlling interest in the Yankee Network; a regional network of radio stations in New England that included WNAC-AM 1260 in Boston, MA (by 1955; the WNAC call letters had moved to 680 AM, licensed to nearby Lawrence, MA after an FCC ruling in 1947 denied WNAC the opportunity to move up to 1200 AM and increase the signal to 50,000 watts); WAAB-AM 1440 in Worcester, MA; WEAN-AM 790 in Providence, RI and WICC-AM 660 in Bridgeport, CT; with the RKO acquisition of Yankee also resulting in General Tire picking up contracts with 17 independently owned stations and a state in the cooperatively-owned Mutual Broadcasting System. The Yankee Network expanded to television with the launch of WNAC-TV 7 in Boston on June 21 (days after Westinghouse launched WBZ-TV 4 in Boston and Elm City Broadcasting launched WNHC-TV 6 in New Haven, CT) while also launching their only full-time (versus experimental FM stations dating to 1939) station launched from the ground up under General Tire ownership: WNAC-FM 98.5. 1950 saw General Tire's broadcasting umbrella expand westward with the acquisition of Los Angeles-based regional network Don Lee Network; bringing in KHJ-AM 930 and KHJ-FM 99.7 (which simulcast the AM station) in Los Angeles; KFRC-AM 610 in San Francisco and KGB-AM 1360 in San Diego while increasing General Tire's share in Mutual (per the agreement; the Don Lee Network television station, KTSL-TV 2, was sold to CBS; being renamed KNXT

and eventually KCBS) and eventually acquiring KFI-TV 9 from Packard distributor Earle C. Anthony; with that station's call letters becoming KHJ-TV. 1952 saw General Tire buy out the similarly-named General Teleradio (formerly known as the Bamberger Broadcasting Service) from R.H. Macy and Company. As part of the General Teleradio acquisition from Macy's; General Tire also picked up all the WOR's (WOR-AM 710; WOR-FM 98.7 and WOR-TV 9) in New York City - with General Teleradio becoming the name of the company's media division - as well as gaining majority control of Mutual Broadcasting System. 1954 saw General sell WEAN-AM to the Providence Journal newspaper and KGB-AM to general manager Marion Harris while acquiring WHBQ-AM 560 and WHBQ-TV 13 in Memphis, TN (the former would become a footnote in music history on July 8; when WHBQ disc jockey Dewey Phillips introduced the radio debut of "That's All Right (Mama)" as recorded by a local kid named Elvis Presley, with future game-show host Wink Martindale – another WHBQ DJ – showing friends around the station when “That's All Right (Mama)” was playing for the first time and later being sent to interview Elvis at a movie theater).

With General Teleradio chairman Thomas O'Neil (whose father was General Tire founder William) recognizing the need for programming for the stations; General Teleradio attempted to acquire RKO's film library in 1953 only to be rejected by Howard Hughes.

However; with Hughes' attempt to acquire total control of the studio failing, Hughes finally gave up, selling RKO Pictures to General Tire for $25 million; ending a 25-year venture into film for Hughes and a reign of error that film historian Betty Lasky compared to a "systematic seven-year rape". O'Neil quickly turned around and sold the rights to the 742 RKO films to C&C Television Corporation; a division of beverage maker Cantrell & Cochrane (an Irish-based firm known mainly for producing alcoholic beverages - mostly cider - and which had attempted to expand into soft drinks with C&C Cola in the States) for $15.2 million, which offered the films to independent stations under the "MovieTime USA" package, while the newly-reorganized RKO Teleradio Pictures kept the rights for cities that RKO owned TV stations in. Additionally; for a brief period RKO Teleradio acquired WEAT-AM 850 and WEAT-TV 12 in West Palm Beach, FL; but would not retain those stations for long before unloading them in 1957. Another subsidiary, RKO Distributing, acquired controlling interest in 1956 in Western Ontario Broadcasting Company; owners of CKLW-AM 800; CKLW-FM 93.9 and CKLW-TV 9 in Windsor, Ontario, Canada but with the stations (particularly CKLW-AM) being easily picked up in much of the Rust Belt, particularly Detroit) while unloading their Hartford station and picking up WGMS-AM 570 and WGMS-FM 103.5 in Washington, D.C..

Meanwhile; General Tire attempted to kickstart the foundering RKO studio by bringing in producer William Dozier to run the studio, and in the first half of 1956 the studio was the busiest it had been in years, including the release of the final two films helmed by Fritz Lang in "While the City Sleeps" and "Beyond a Reasonable Doubt" (the latter also being the final film Tyrone Power completed, as he died from a massive heart attack while shooting the 1959 film “Solomon and Sheba”); but were still saddled with a number of the Hughes-era B-movies such as 1955's "Pearl of the South Pacific"; 1956's "The Conqueror" (more on that in a little bit) and 1957's "Jet Pilot" (a film starring John Wayne and Janet Leigh with backing with the U.S. Air Force. The film finished shooting in 1951)

Speaking of, "The Conqueror", it would go on to become one of the most infamous films produced by RKO - mainly due to a series of problems that developed in the aftermath of the film. The film boasted an all-star cast that included Agnes Moorehead, Pedro Armendariz, Thomas Gomez, John Hoyt, William Conrad and lead roles by John Wayne and Susan Hayward; with Dick Powell directing the film. However, despite being the most profitable film produced by RKO during its twilight years (making $4.5 million), it was not quite enough to cover the $6 million budget. Other issues soon surfaced; as many critics panned the film - particularly a badly miscast John Wayne as

Genghis Khan.

However, the film's most notable legacy was a dark one. Parts of the film were shot in Utah, including exterior scenes filmed at the Escalante Desert near St. George, UT - 137 miles downwind of the Nevada National Security Site; with the area getting much of the fallout from nuclear testing (11 above-ground nuclear weapons tests took place at the site in 1953 alone); with Howard Hughes later having 60 tons of dirt shipped back to Hollywood to lend realism to reshoots. While the producers knew about the nuclear tests, federal officials assured residents that the tests posed no danger to public health.

Unfortunately, that proved not to be true, as of the 220 crew members involved in "The Conqueror"; 91 of them - roughly 41% - developed cancer at some point; with just over half of that total, 46, dying as a result. Among those stricken were director Dick Powell (who died in January 1963); Pedro Armendariz (an indirect example; Armendariz was diagnosed with kidney cancer in 1960 and shortly after learning it had become terminal committed suicide in June 1963); Agnes Moorehead - who began her career with an appearance in RKO's "Citizen Kane" and who was known as a non-smoker, teetotaler and health enthusiast - succumbed to uterine cancer in 1974 (incidentally; Moorehead would be best known for her later role as Endora, the witch

mother of main character Samantha Stephens in the 1964-72 ABC series "Bewitched" - which had its own string of cast members dying at relatively young ages; often from cancer {among those Alice Pearce {Gladys Kravitz; Pearce died in 1966 from ovarian cancer at the age of 48, ultimately receiving a posthumous Best Supporting Actress Emmy that year}; Paul Lynde {Uncle Arthur; Lynde died from a heart attack in 1982 at the age of 55 and after having been a heavy drinker}; Dick York {the original Darrin Stephens; York - let go in 1969 after developing a painkiller addiction due to a severe back injury; as well as York being a heavy smoker as well - dying from emphysema complications in 1992 at the age of 63}; Dick Sargent {the second Darrin Stephens; Sargent succumbed to prostate cancer in 1994 at the age of 64} and Elizabeth Montgomery {main character Samantha Stephens; Montgomery would pass away from colon cancer in 1995 at the age of 63; like York, Sargent and Montgomery were also heavy smokers}) - with Moorehead's mother Mary (who lived to the age of 106 in 1990) blaming the film for the cancer that claimed Agnes' life; Susan Hayward (who had been diagnosed with a lung tumor in 1972 and eventually also developed brain cancer; which claimed her life in 1975 at the age of 57); John Wayne (who succumbed to stomach cancer at the age of 72 in 1979; though some have noted that the Duke's heavy smoking habit {Wayne was known to smoke as many as 6 packs of cigarettes a day} might have aggravated things) and John

Hoyt (Hoyt - like Moorehead better known for a late career sitcom role; in his case as Grandpa Stanley Kanisky on the 1981-87 NBC sitcom "Gimme a Break" - lived to the age of 86 before passing away from lung cancer in 1991). Additionally; a number of relatives of lead actors John Wayne and Susan Hayward had cancer scares. Michael Wayne (John's elder son and who appeared in an uncredited role as a Mongol guard) ended up successfully beating back a skin cancer diagnosis; brother Patrick (who also appeared uncredited) had a benign tumor removed from his breast; while Tim Barker (Susan Hayward's son) also had a tumor removed - in this case from his mouth - that turned out to be benign. A guilt-ridden Hughes eventually bought up every print of "The Conqueror" for $12 million to ensure it would not be seen publicly (after its initial release; "The Conqueror" would not be available to the public again until Universal Pictures acquired the film from the Hughes estate in 1979).

In January 1957; RKO announced the closure of its domestic distribution division (turning it over to Universal-International) and production at RKO would be closed at the end of the month; with the Hollywood and Culver City facilities being sold later in the year to Desilu Productions (owned by "I Love Lucy" stars Lucille Ball {herself an RKO contract player from 1935-42} and husband Desi Arnaz) for $6.15 million (the one-time RKO Hollywood studio - following a series of

mergers - eventually became part of CBS Television Studios; while the Culver City studio exists as an independent facility, though the Forty Acres backlot was torn down during the 1970s). Verboten!; the last film project for RKO (as a co-production with Samuel Fuller's Globe Productions and featured a cast including German-born actress Susan Cummings; Tom Pittman {who would not live to see the film's release, being killed in a car accident on Halloween night 1958} and the lead role by then-little known James Best; better known for his role as bumbling Hazzard County Sheriff Rosco P. Coltrane on the 1979-85 CBS series "The Dukes of Hazzard"), would eventually be released by Columbia Pictures in 1959.

4. STATIONS INVOLVED

With RKO General no longer in the movie-making business; the company turned its focus on an increasing level to its broadcasting department, including several radio and a number of television stations - most, but not all of which were independent stations. By 1960; those stations were...

- KHJ-TV 9 (Los Angeles, CA; independent {acquired in 1951})
- WGTH-TV 18 (Hartford-New Haven, CT; independent {acquired in

1954-56 and sold off to CBS; re-acquired in 1959 after CBS decided to become an affiliate of Travelers Insurance-owned WTIC-TV})

- WNAC-TV 7 (Boston, MA; ABC {the only TV station owned by what became RKO General from its beginning})
- WOR-TV 9 (New York, NY; independent {acquired in 1952})
- CKLW-TV 9 (Windsor, Ontario, Canada {also covering Detroit, MI}; Canadian Broadcasting Corporation {acquired in 1956})
- WHBQ-TV 13 (Memphis, TN; ABC {secondary affiliation until 1956; primary CBS affiliate from 1953 until the sign-on of WREC-TV 3 [now WREG] in 1956}; {acquired in 1954})
- KHJ-AM 930 (Los Angeles, CA; MOR {middle of the road} format {acquired in 1951})
- KHJ-FM 101.1 (Los Angeles, CA; simulcast of KHJ-AM {acquired in 1951})
- KFRC-AM 610 (San Francisco, CA; MOR format {acquired in 1951})
- KFRC-FM 106.1 (San Francisco, CA; simulcast of KFRC-AM {launched in 1960})
- WGMS-AM 570 (Washington, D.C.; classical format {acquired in 1957})
- WGMS-FM 103.5 (Washington, D.C.; simulcast of WGMS-AM {acquired in 1957})

- WNAC-AM 680 (Boston, MA; format {acquired in 1953 in swap with then-Lawrence Daily Eagle and Evening Tribune-owned WLAW-AM 680/WLAW-FM 93.7 that led to the WNAC calls moving from the 1260 AM position; with the original WNAC being sold to Vic Diehm and Associates while the WLAW-FM license was surrendered to the FCC in order to keep WNAC-FM 98.7})
- WRKO-FM 98.5 (Boston, MA; simulcast of WNAC-AM {launched in 1948; call letters changed from WNAC-FM in 1957})
- WOR-AM 710 (New York, NY; full service {talk/MOR} format {acquired in 1952})
- WOR-FM 98.7 (New York, NY; full service {talk/MOR} format {acquired in 1952})
- CKLW-AM 800 (Windsor, Ontario, Canada {also covering Detroit, MI};; CBC Dominion Network until it folded in 1962; variety format {acquired in 1956})
- CKLW-FM 93.9 (Windsor, Ontario, Canada {also covering Detroit, MI}; simulcast of CKLW-AM until 1963 {acquired in 1956})
- WHBQ-AM 560 (Memphis, TN; Top 40 format {acquired in 1954})

RKO had its ambitions elsewhere as well; entering a complex agreement in 1959 with NBC in which RKO would acquire NBC-owned WRC-AM 980; WRC-FM 93.9 and WRC-TV 4 in Washington, D.C.; swap WNAC-AM; WRKO-FM and WNAC-TV in Boston in exchange for WRCV-

AM 1060 and WRCV-TV 3 in Philadelphia - which had already acquired the stations from Westinghouse in a controversial swap in 1956 that resulted in Group W acquiring the previously NBC-owned WTAM-AM; WTAM-FM and WNBK-TV 3 in Cleveland; with Group W alleging to the Justice Department and FCC that the trade was coerced due to NBC threatening to yank their affiliation from the Philadelphia station (previously KYW; upon the trade Westinghouse transferred the KYW call letters to the Cleveland stations) and Boston NBC affiliate WBZ-TV 4; and - since FCC rules did not allow ownership of both the WRC and WGMS stations - selling the WGMS stations to Crowell-Collier Broadcasting (whose parent company had itself recently merged with educational publisher MacMillan) - while in a separate but related deal; NBC would subsequently announce plans to buy then-independent KTVU-TV 2 in San Francisco, CA. Ultimately, the agreement fell through and in 1965 the FCC nullified the Group W-NBC trade; denying the proposed license swap on grounds that NBC would enter the Boston market as a result of fraudulent means related to the Cleveland-Philadelphia deal (somewhat ironic in light of what would happen with RKO later that year); resulting in the KYW calls returning to Philadelphia (to this day; KYW treats the calls as having "moved" to Cleveland in 1956 before "moving back" to the City of Brotherly Love 9 years later; while NBC regained the Cleveland stations {with WNBK eventually being renamed WKYC}).

A common thread with RKO, especially the independent stations, was their movie lineup; which featured the label "Million Dollar Movie" (a brand introduced by WOR prior to General Tire buying RKO) and featured classic films - mainly, but not exclusively RKO productions - with a theme package that came, initially from 1952's "Ivanhoe" but more famously 1939's "Gone With the Wind". Also, starting in 1962 WHCT - whose general manager during this time was future CBS News Sunday Morning host Charles Osgood - became the first station to attempt an extended subscription television service, carrying movies, sports, concerts and live performances without advertising, with income via installation and rental fees (paid weekly) for devices that descrambled the signal (provided by Zenith). This lasted until January 31, 1969.

5. 1965-73: THE CHAOS BEGINS

Trouble began brewing for RKO General in 1965. That year, it faced a license challenge for Los Angeles station KHJ-TV by a group called Fidelity Television. Initially, the challenge was due to the programming quality being "second-rate". Soon afterwards; a more serious charge was levied accusing RKO parent company General Tire of conditioning dealings with vendors on the basis of the vendors buying ad time on RKO-owned stations; known as "reciprocal trade practices" - which are considered to be anti-competitive. Executives from RKO General and General Tire denied the claims in testimony before the FCC, but in 1969; the commission issued an initial ruling siding with Fidelity. Also in 1969; the RKO-owned ABC affiliate in Boston, WNAC-TV, faced a license challenge from two local groups; Community Broadcasting and Dudley Station Corporation, also alleging RKO and General Tire participated in reciprocal trade practices.

Again in 1969; the Canadian government ruled that Canadian radio and television stations must have at least 80% Canadian ownership. RKO General - uninterested in being minority owners - subsequently sold the CKLW stations (CKLW-AM 800; CKLW-FM 93.9; CKLW-TV 9) to a joint venture between the Canadian Broadcasting Company and Baton Broadcasting in 1970 (this partnership lasted until 1975; when Baton took the CKLW radio stations while CBC kept CKLW-

TV; changing the call letters to CBET. CBET is still owned by the CBC; while the CKLW radio stations are owned by Bell Media, a successor to Baton).

Meanwhile; the RKO-owned radio stations were at the peak of their success with KHJ-AM's 1968 introduction of the "Boss Radio" format (this format; created by Bill Drake and Gene Chenault, modified the standard Top 40 format to limit the number of records while increasing the rotation of the biggest hits; shortening the length of jingles and slashing the amount of disc jockey talk), resulting in KHJ-AM rocketing to the top of the ratings in L.A.; with other stations (among them RKO-owned KFRC in San Francisco; WRKO in Boston and - prior to the aforementioned sale to the CBC-Baton venture - Windsor, Ontario's CKLW {whose overnight signal reach and clear channel transmitter gave it such a strong signal that it could be picked up as far away as the Soviet Union}; as well as non-RKO stations such as WFIL-AM 560 in Philadelphia).

However, tragedy would indirectly be tied to the station in 1970. That summer; KHJ-AM launched a "Super Summer Spectacular" promotion; in which a disc jockey would drive what was termed a "conspicuous red automobile" to a designated area described over the air. The first person to find the DJ and meet a required condition (i.e.:

wearing a certain piece of clothing or giving a correct answer to a question) would win a cash prize and be interviewed on air.

Dateline: July 16, 1970. Two teenagers were chasing a KHJ disc jockey at speeds up to 80 MPH in hopes of being the closest to the disc jockey. Unfortunately, one of the drivers ended up forcing 32-year-old Ronald Weirum off the road, with Weirum being killed when his car overturned. RKO, both teenagers and the manufacturer of Weirum's car were the subject of a wrongful death claim filed by Weirum's widow and children. One of the teenagers settled out of court; while the other teen and RKO General were found liable for the accident, resulting in Weirum's family being awarded $300,000 in damages. RKO appealed, but ultimately in 1975 the California Supreme Court affirmed the verdict that RKO was legally liable on the basis that the jury found sufficient evidence to find that the risk of harm to the public was foreseeable; with the California Supreme Court's Weirum v. RKO General, Inc. decision being cited as a major example on the subject of duty of care in regards to tort law.

6. 1973-79: A PARTIAL VICTORY & MORE SCANDALOUS DISCLOSURES

Turning back to the RKO licensing mess; in 1973 RKO General would receive one of two partial victories during the 1973-74 timeframe, as the FCC ruled in RKO's favor in the KHJ licensing battle pending findings in the then-ongoing investigation of the situation involving RKO-owned WNAC (which had switched affiliation from ABC to CBS in 1972 after ABC moved to WCVB-TV 5; which had replaced the original WHDH on channel 5 after that station's own run-ins with the FCC involving allegations of improprieties in the granting of that station's original license in 1957). When it was time for RKO to apply to renew the license of New York station WOR-TV 9 in 1974; its renewal was also tied to that of the WNAC case. On June 21 of that year; despite finding that General Tire and RKO General did indeed engage in reciprocal trade practices, an administrative law judge approved the renewal of WNAC's license (and by extension; the licenses of KHJ-TV and WOR-TV).

However, in December 1975; Community Broadcasting - one of the companies challenging WNAC's license - requested the FCC revisit the case with the most serious allegations yet against General Tire; including allegations of bribing foreign officials, keeping a slush fund for political campaign contributions and misappropriating revenue from its overseas operations. RKO denied those charges during a series of proceedings (during which the Securities and Exchange Commission launched a separate 1976 investigation of General Tire); only for General Tire - in a July 1, 1977 settlement with the SEC - to admit to severe corporate misconduct; including the charges of bribery and maintaining a slush fund.

Incidentally before we move on; in 1978 RKO General revived the RKO Pictures studio that provided its name as a division co-producing feature films and television productions, mostly in partnership with Universal; first with 1981's "Carbon Copy" and 1982 releases such as "The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas" (starring Burt Reynolds and Dolly Parton); "The Border" (with Jack Nicholson) and a remake of its 1942 release "Cat People"; later producing films on its own such as 1987's "Hamburger Hill".

7. 1980-82: RKO GENERAL FORCED OUT IN BOSTON

Finally; the latest series of hearings and investigations culminated in RKO General being stripped of WNAC-TV's license on June 6, 1980 after determining that RKO "lacked the requisite character" to have the station's license; citing the 1960s reciprocal trade practices, fraudulent financial filings and the misconduct of parent General Tire in fields unrelated to broadcasting. Most significant in the ruling against RKO was its dishonesty to the FCC; as RKO had withheld evidence of General Tire's actions, including that the SEC had investigated General Tire during the 1976-77 period; denying improperly reporting exchanging broadcast time for various services (more of the reciprocal trade practices) even though evidence to the

contrary could be found in General Tire's own annual report for 1976 - thus in the eyes of the FCC, RKO General's "persistent lack of candor" had threatened "the integrity of the Commission's processes". Since earlier proceedings had tied the KHJ-TV and WOR-TV licenses to the status of WNAC-TV; this led to RKO losing those station's licenses as well.

RKO appealed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia; and while the appeals court upheld the revocation of the WNAC license (based exclusively on RKO's lack of candor), the candor issue was interpreted in such a narrow fashion that it applied only to WNAC-TV; subsequently requiring new hearings for WOR-TV and KHJ-TV. RKO made one last appeal to the Supreme Court; but on April 19, 1982 the Supreme Court refused to review the case. Out of options, RKO sold WNAC-TV 7's assets to New England Television; a company formed from the merger of the competitors for WNAC's license, Community Broadcasting and Dudley Station Corporation and by this time controlled by David G. Mugar; whose father Stephen founded the Boston-area Star Market supermarket chain. NETV, which had already received a construction permit for a new station in February, changed the station’s call letters to WNEV-TV 7.

8. 1983-86: THE NEW JERSEY LOOPHOLE

By February 1983; the FCC began taking competing applications for all of the licenses of RKO General's stations. But RKO, looking for a lifeline, managed to find one in Capitol Hill when - after intense lobbying - Congress passed legislation sponsored by Sen. Bill Bradley (D-NJ) requiring the FCC to automatically renew the license of any commercial VHF station moving to a state without one "notwithstanding any other provision of law". Only 2 states met that

requirement: Delaware and New Jersey. The latter state's last commercial VHF station; WNTA-TV 13 in Newark, NJ (now WNET), flipped to a non-commercial; educational station in 1962 and is currently one of the main sources of programming for PBS.

Taking advantage of the new law; RKO transferred the city of license for WOR-TV 9 - which had become a national superstation uplinked via satellite and made available on cable in 1979 - to Secaucus, NJ; 7 miles west of Manhattan, on April 20, 1983 (an interesting irony is that WOR radio was originally licensed to Newark, NJ upon its sign-on in 1922. The radio station moved its studios across the Hudson in 1926 but remained licensed to Newark until 1941). As part of the conditions for the license renewal; WOR's main studio was required to move to New Jersey (which happened when WOR moved to its 9 Broadcast Plaza building on January 13, 1986) and step up coverage of New Jersey news (though WOR was still very much a New York station at heart; as evidenced by it retaining the longtime local television rights to New York Mets games). Shortly after the license changed from New York to Secaucus (notably, promos for WOR around that time used the slogan "On the Move"; a tongue-in-cheek reference to the move); New Jersey's State Senate filed a petition to the FCC to allow WOR's signal into southern New Jersey; however the FCC - for reasons including the fact that WOR's syndicated program rights would

interfere with those held by stations in Philadelphia - denied that request.

Meanwhile; General Tire restructured in 1984; creating a holding company known as GenCorp, with General Tire and RKO as its chief subsidiaries while selling their RKO Radio Networks division (though remaining a radio station owner); while by 1985 the original incarnation of Frontier Airlines - which RKO General acquired in 1968 - was sold despite efforts by an employee union coalition to People Express Airlines. Ultimately, Frontier was shuttered on August 24, 1986 (People Express was itself bought out later in 1986 by Continental Airlines and folded into Continental on February 1, 1987; with Continental eventually being absorbed into United Airlines on March 3, 2012. The current incarnation of Frontier Airlines launched on July 5, 1994; with several former Frontier executives founding this version and both versions being based in Denver {the original at the now-defunct Stapleton Airport; the current version at its successor, Denver International Airport}).

However, the continued pressure from the FCC led RKO to place WOR-TV and KHJ-TV (the latter station's ratings having collapsed in the aftermath of the RKO legal drama that saw its cash reserves drained rapidly to the degree that KHJ's large lineup of sports programming -

including the Los Angeles Kings and the Showtime-era Los Angeles Lakers - was the only thing keeping the station relevant) up for sale in late 1985. With regards to WOR-TV; the main bidders for the station including Westinghouse Broadcasting (Group W; whose own controversial swap with NBC in Cleveland and Philadelphia had led to an attempted trade in Washington between RKO and NBC that fell through 2 decades earlier); Chris-Craft Industries and a joint venture of Cox Enterprises and MCA/Universal.

9. 1986-91: END OF RKO AS A BROADCASTER

Returning to the state of RKO General's television and radio stations. As mentioned earlier; a three-way bidding war for WOR-TV was taking place as 1986 began between Group W; Chris-Craft and a joint venture of MCA and Cox Enterprises; and in February 1986 the Cox/MCA venture ended up beating out Group W and Chris-Craft; with FCC approval coming in late November 1986 (by that point; Cox ended up dropping out of the partnership in a dispute over which of the companies would actually run WOR), resulting in MCA becoming the sole owner effective on April 21, 1987. Due to FCC regulations at the time that meant that TV and radio stations in the same market but with different owners had to use different call signs; eight days after MCA became the new owners of WOR-TV, the station's call letters were modified to add an extra "W"; making the station's call letters WWOR-TV 9.

The sale could not have come at a better time for RKO; as four months later; the hammer dropped on the 2-decade battle between RKO General and the FCC in a ruling by FCC administrative law judge Edward Kuhlmann on August 11, 1987 when Kuhlmann ruled RKO unfit to be a broadcast licensee due to repeated deception. In addition to the examples covered earlier; Kuhlmann - who described RKO's action as "the worst case of dishonesty in FCC history" - also discovered that RKO lied to advertisers about their station's ratings; conducted

fraudulent billing; filed numerous false financial statements and on multiple occasions lied to the FCC about an audit report that had been destroyed. GenCorp responded by saying that all of the employees engaged in those practices had since been fired and planned an appeal of what they termed a "deeply flawed" ruling; only for the FCC to note that any appeal would almost certainly be denied, recommending RKO sell off their remaining stations to avoid the licenses being stripped. Considering that GenCorp had other problems as a result of having to fight off a hostile takeover bid and was desperate for cash, it made sense for GenCorp to wind down their broadcasting operations.

First to go following the FCC ruling was the recently revived RKO Pictures; which after an attempt to sell the studio to management fell through went to private equity firm Wesray Capital Corporation (formed by former Treasury Secretary William E. Simon and future New Jersey Nets co-owner Ray Chambers) via its Entertainment Acquisition Company; which soon combined RKO Pictures with the Six Flags amusement park chain to form RKO/Six Flags Entertainment. Soon afterwards; the Boston radio stations; with both WRKO-AM 680 (the former WNAC-AM and by 1987 a talk station) and WROR-FM 98.5 (which dropped the WRKO call letters in 1968 and was at this point a gold-based adult contemporary station) were sold to Atlantic Ventures Corporation; run by cable TV executive Steve Dodge, for $28 million in

November 1988 (GenCorp received just over half of that amount, $17.5 million, with the remaining $10.5 million being split among past competitors for the station licenses).

WOR-AM 710 in New York (which shifted to talk radio by 1985) and WRKS-FM 98.7 (the former WOR-FM; which had become an urban contemporary station under the 98.7 "Kiss FM" branding; starting in 1983 WRKS was the first station in the country to air rap music on a regular basis) were split up; with WRKS going to Atlanta-based Summit Communications Group and WOR-AM to Buckley Broadcasting by the end of June 1989. Its Washington radio stations; WGMS-AM 570 and WGMS-FM 103.5 (both playing classical music - an attempt in the 1970s to flip WGMS-AM to a Top 40 format had drawn significant blowback - including from Congress; which passed legislation to make them exempt from FCC regulations requiring separate programs on AM and FM outlets owned by the same entity); had by 1989 went to a partnership of venture capitalists John VerStanding and brothers Steven and Mitchell Rales (founders of Danaher Corporation).

After 23 years; the fate of KHJ-TV 9 was finally settled when RKO gave up its attempt to keep its license; which was granted to the company whose challenge started the string of events leading to RKO General's downfall; Fidelity Television, only for Fidelity to transfer the

license to a company that had done plenty of business with the original RKO studio decades earlier: The Walt Disney Company. Disney would pay $324 million for the station and its non-license assets; with two-thirds of the funds going to RKO and the rest to Fidelity; subsequently clearing out the "old guard" at the station (including longtime general manager Charles Velona) and on December 2, 1989; Disney renamed the station KCAL-TV 9 and rebranded as "California 9". KHJ's one-time radio sister stations; KRTH-AM 930 (the former KHJ-AM using what it termed a "Smokin' Oldies" format with early rock and roll after the KHJ calls were retired in 1986) and KRTH-FM 101.1 went to Beasley Broadcasting for $86.6 million. By October, the KRTH stations were split up; with Beasley selling KRTH-AM to Liberman Broadcasting for $23 million, with the deal finalized in March 1990 and KRTH-AM being renamed KKHJ-AM (similar to one-time sister station WOR-TV had done when it was sold; adding the extra "K" as a link to the legacy KHJ calls).

WFYR-FM 103.5 in Chicago - which had just returned to an oldies format abandoned in 1977 in favor of a live adult contemporary in January 1989 - was sold to Summit Broadcasting for $21 million; and when the sale was finalized that October WFYR had reverted to the adult contemporary format. The lone remaining RKO General TV station - Memphis ABC affiliate WHBQ-TV 13 - and WHBQ-AM 560, which by then had gone the way of an increasing number of AM

stations in switching to a talk format; were dealt to Adams Communications by 1990; with Adams selling off WHBQ-AM soon afterwards. Finally; KFRC-AM 610 in San Francisco, which had flipped to an adult standards format in 1986, went to Bedford Broadcasting by 1991; ending a turbulent 4-decade run of RKO General as a broadcast company.

10. DENOUEMENT

What of the companies and stations involved? Let's take a look as we wrap up.

- GenCorp - in the midst of the disbandment of its media arm - had also sold the company that it was originally known for, General Tire and Rubber Company, to German tire company Continental AG in 1987 while spinning off its DiversiTech General rubber compound division, which eventually became OMNOVA Solutions in 1999. GenCorp also owned a rocketry and aeronautics division named Aerojet; which had been involved in building engines for rockets since the dawn of the Space Age, including engines for the Titan rockets, Minuteman and Polaris missiles and the Apollo Command/Service Module's main engine. In 2012; one of

Aerojet's competitors, Pratt & Whitney Rocketdyne, was also acquired by GenCorp. The buyout was completed the next year; and in 2015 the two aerospace firms were merged to form Aerojet Rocketdyne - with GenCorp adopting the merged firm's name as its own; rebranding the holding company as Aerojet Rocketdyne Holdings. In 2020; Lockheed Martin attempted to buy out Aerojet Rocketdyne as part of a deal totaling $4.4 billion; only for opposition by Raytheon led to moves by the Federal Trade Commission to block the deal. On February 13, 2022; Lockheed announced that they were abandoning the proposed purchase.

- After 2 years under Wesray ownership and no films produced during this time; RKO Pictures was spun off; being acquired by producer Ted Hartley and his wife, Dina Merrill (born Nedenia Marjorie Hutton) - an actress and heir to the Post Cereals (through mother Marjorie Merriweather Post) fortune; with Merrill's father being E.F. Hutton founder Edward Francis Hutton (Dina's stage name being adopted from Charles E. Merrill; like her father a prominent stockbroker who went on to co-found Merrill Lynch) and combined it with their own Pavilion Communications. RKO entered production with the first project under the Hartley-Merrill team, 1990's "False Identity"; later distributing the independently-produced 1992 film "Laws of

Gravity". By 1998; RKO teamed with Disney for the first time in 45 years with the remake of "Mighty Joe Young"; though - in reverse of the previous RKO-Disney partnership - Disney was handling the distribution via its Buena Vista Pictures division and released under the Walt Disney Pictures banner; later co-producing TV films and films with modest productions, later co-producing 2003's "Never Gonna Dance"; a remake of the 1936 Fred Astaire-Ginger Rogers film "Swing Time". However, that year RKO was embroiled in a legal feud with Wall Street Financial Associates; which Hartley and Merrill accused of fraudulently inducing into signing an acquisition agreement by hiding their plans to buy and dismantle RKO. WSFA requested a preliminary injunction prohibiting any sale of the majority owners' interests to a third-party; a request which was denied in July 2003, and RKO began exploring a sale to InternetStudios.com; only for the sale to fall through in 2004 when that studio apparently went out of business. Since then, most of RKO's few productions have continued to be remakes of previous films, such as 2007's "Are We Done Yet?" (based on 1948's "Mr. Blandings Builds His Dream House") and 2009's "Beyond a Reasonable Doubt" (a remake of the 1956 film; the last American film directed by Fritz Lang and one of the last films released by the original RKO) along with co-productions such as 2012's "A Late Quartet" and 2015's "Barely

Lethal"; those being the most recent releases by RKO. In 2005; RKO announced a horror/thriller-oriented division titled Roseblood Movie Company; a reference to Rosebud, the name of the sled whose name turns out to be the last words uttered by Charles Foster Kane in "Citizen Kane".

- KCAL-TV 9, the former KHJ-TV which was at the center of the license battle that brought down RKO General, had been - as mentioned in the previous section - acquired by Disney in 1989. By 1992; Disney decided they no longer wanted the station (which in addition to the Disney Afternoon block had added more family-oriented syndicated series and reruns and even managed to acquire a heavily-censored English dub of the 1992-97 version of the anime "Sailor Moon") and agreed to sell the station to Pinelands, Inc. (more on them in the look at WWOR) - which would reunite KCAL with one-time RKO sister station WWOR - in exchange for Disney getting a 45% ownership stake, but the deal never was finalized; as Pinelands sold WWOR to Chris-Craft, owner of rival Los Angeles independent KCOP-TV 13. Disney's ownership officially ended in 1996 when Disney purchased Capital Cities/ABC. As FCC regulations at the time prohibited duopolies (ownership of two television stations in the same market); Disney not surprisingly decided to keep KABC-TV 7, the Los Angeles O&O of the newly-acquired ABC, selling KCAL to

Young Broadcasting (which Disney had a stake in) on May 14, 1996 for $385 million. Young - a Nashville-based firm which owned that city's ABC affiliate, WKRN-TV 2, as well as Albany, NY's WTEN-TV 10 among others and would later acquire San Francisco NBC affiliate KRON-TV 4 in 2000; only for a dispute with NBC over its attempts to force Young to run KRON as an O&O due to Young beating out NBC in its attempt to buy the station to result in NBC moving its affiliation to ABC affiliate KNTV-TV 11 in nearby San Jose (which it eventually bought outright) while KRON was forced to be an independent - retained the now-aging Disney Afternoon block for KCAL until 1999; replacing it with Disney's One Too (a partnership with UPN that aired locally on KCAL instead of KCOP, by now a UPN station) and carried mostly repeats of shows aired on ABC's "One Saturday Morning" block. The KRON acquisition also caused Young to go deep into debt and eventually KCAL was acquired by CBS' then-parent company Viacom (duopolies having become permissible by the FCC following a 4-1 ruling in 1999 provided that, among other requirements, the 4 highest-rated stations remain under separate ownership) on February 14, 2002; with KCAL's operations merging with those of new sister station and CBS O&O KCBS-TV 2 (this also reunited KCAL with former RKO sister station KRTH-FM 101.1; with the properties remaining under the

same umbrella until the 2017 sale of CBS' radio division to Entercom {now Audacy}). KCAL is still owned by CBS and is one of three independent stations; along with KTXA-TV 21 {previously the local UPN affiliate} in Dallas-Fort Worth, TX and WLNY-TV 55 {branded as WLNY-TV 10/55 due to being carried on New York cable outlets on channel 10; similar to San Diego NBC O&O KNSD's longtime branding as NBC 39; cable 7 or similar variants}; licensed to Riverhead, NY and mainly covering Long Island). On January 5, 2023; KCAL and sister station KCBS announced rebranding of their newscasts, with KCAL News being the official brand for both KCAL and (somewhat surprisingly) KCBS' newscasts.

- KKHJ-AM 930, upon the closing of Liberman’s purchase, flipped the station to a Spanish-language station under the branding “Radio Alegria” after a regional form of Mexican music. This lasted until 1997; when KKHJ - that November - decided to try a Spanish language all-news format; the only station in the United States to do so. After just over a year of poor ratings, KKHJ reverted to a regional Mexican format, this time under the branding “La Ranchera”. By the late 1990s; KKHJ program director Alfredo Rodriguez and chief engineer Jerry Lewine came up with an interesting idea to get the original KHJ call letters back. Since the FCC had ceased issuing three-letter calls to radio

stations in the 1930s; the two noticed that the two “K’s” in KKHJ’s call letters sounded like “caca” (slang for feces) in Spanish (resulting in the call letters being pronounced in English; somewhat awkward for a Spanish-language station). The station collected letters and managed to successfully convince the FCC to drop one of the “K’s”; resulting in the original KHJ calls being restored on March 15, 2000. KHJ would - beginning in 2008 - pick up Spanish language rights for local Los Angeles Dodgers radio coverage. In 2014; KHJ was sold by Liberman to IHR Educational Broadcasting, a Catholic-owned broadcasting firm (the “IHR” stands for “Immaculate Heart Radio”, a reference to the Roman Catholic teaching of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the mother of Jesus; whose heart in Catholic doctrine is a reference to her love for God the Father, Jesus Christ and - in a divergence from Protestant teaching - viewed as having a motherly love for all mankind as part of their devotion) with the “La Ranchera” format moved to KWIZ-FM 96.7 in nearby Santa Ana. The format change marked KHJ becoming an English-language station for the first time in nearly a quarter-century. In 2017; IHR Educational Broadcasting and Starboard Media Foundation (another Catholic-owned group whose stations used the “Relevant Radio” branding) merged and in 2018 - after being a non-commercial station since IHR’s acquisition - the FCC granted permission for

KHJ to return to commercial radio status.

- KRTH-FM 101.1 was in the midst of a fierce battle with rival oldies station KODJ-FM 93.1 (later KCBS-FM) beginning shortly after the KRTH stations were sold by RKO General in 1989. KRTH (using the "K-Earth" branding) was the more successful of the rival oldies station, with KODJ adopting the KCBS-FM calls in 1993 and focused mostly on pre-1965 music while KRTH focused on the 1964-69 timeframe as their main period of music with scattered pre-1964 and 1970s songs while bringing in The Real Don Steele and Robert W. Morgan, both of whom went back to the KHJ "Boss Radio" era in 1992. KRTH was subsequently sold to Infinity Radio in 1994 (with Westinghouse - which had recently acquired CBS - in turn buying Infinity in 1996; making KCBS-FM and KRTH sister stations) while proceeding to drop pre-British Invasion era songs over the course of time in favor of music from later in the 1960s, primarily Motown. Tragedy struck twice in 1997 when Don Steele and Robert W. Morgan were both striken with lung cancer, with both men dying within a few months of each other. Their deaths marked the end of an era as KRTH's last connections to the "Boss" era. In 2002; CBS reunited KRTH with former TV sister station KCAL-TV 9; with a subsequent facility swap where KRTH moved from the Columbia Square building occupied by KCBS-TV 2 (which had KCAL's operations being

merged with KCBS) to the building on the Paramount lot given up by KCAL. The two would remain under the same umbrella until 2017; when KRTH and KCBS were sold to Entercom (renamed Audacy, Inc. in 2021). With the oldies audience generally aging; KRTH flipped to "classic hits", adding songs predominantly from 1980s artists and by 2018; KRTH's playlists covered mostly the late 1970s to early 2000s, though limited to avoid overlapping with KCBS-FM's adult hits format

- KFRC-AM 610, the last of the RKO-owned stations to be unloaded, would go to Infinity Broadcasting; which shortly afterwards paired the station later in 1991 with KXXX-FM 99.7 (which had been an NBC-owned station for many years before NBC shuttered its radio division in 1988), and starting in August 1993; KXXX ran a simulcast of KFRC (which hit #1 in the 25-54 demographic in the City by the Bay); eventually being renamed KFRC-FM. This lasted until 2005; when Infinity's parent company, Viacom, bought KOVR-TV 13, the CBS station in Sacramento from Sinclair Broadcast Group. As part of the KOVR purchase, Infinity was forced to sell either one of its Sacramento stations or a Bay Area station with city-grade coverage of Sacramento; culminating in Infinity selling KFRC-AM to Family Stations (co-founded by Harold Camping, an Alameda, CA-based preacher most noted for predicting the Second Coming of Jesus Christ first

in 1994 and later on two different occasions in 2011; none of which happened. Upon Camping's death in 2013; Family Radio gradually began distancing themselves from Camping's teachings before making a complete break by 2019) while retaining the FM station (interestingly, at the time of the KFRC sale; the Oakland A's had a contract with the station to carry their baseball games, and after the sale to Family Radio; the new owners decided to honor the agreement until the A's season came to an end). The station has been using the KEAR-AM call letters since October 17, 2005 (incidentally, the day after the death of Bill King, the longtime voice of the A's {as well as other Oakland-based sports teams such as the Raiders}); and in 2006 the KFRC-FM call letters moved to the 106.9 frequency formerly occupied by KEAR.

- WGMS-AM 570 - four years after being sold to the Rales-VerStandig team (the Rales brothers eventually buying out John VerStandig) - converted WGMS-AM into the original frequency for D.C. sports talk station WTEM in May of 1992 (it was felt that the classical audience was aging out of being desirable for advertisers). WTEM - acquired by Chancellor Broadcasting in 1996 - eventually moved to the 980 AM frequency as part of a format swap between WTEM and WWRC, a business talk station on the 1260 AM position. The 570 AM spot on the dial would

eventually become WWRC's home under ownership of Salem Communications.

- Meanwhile; WGMS-FM 103.5 would largely not face significant changes (including continuing its classical format) until 2006, when Bonneville International (the broadcasting division of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints or the Mormons) announced an arrangement with the Washington Post where the frequencies held by WTOP-AM 1500 and WTOP-FM 107.7 would be combined and moved to a new station, WTWP (for "Washington Post Radio"); with WTOP-FM moving to WGMS' 103.5 position, WGMS moving to 103.9 (Braddock Heights, MD) and 104.1 FM (Waldorf, MD; displacing WWZZ-FM on both positions) - resulting in the switch taking effect on January 4, 2006 and WWZZ shutting down altogether. However, the 104.1 transmitter meant WGMS was broadcasting at 20,000 watts with a repeater signal at just 350 watts; a far cry from the previous 103.5 MHz position's strength of 44,000 watts and also resulting in a much weaker signal covering metro Washington. By December, the Washington Post announced a plan to sell the classical station to Washington Redskins (now Commanders) owner Daniel Snyder. who intended to flip it to sports talk as part of the Triple X ESPN Radio network (had this worked; with public radio WETA-FM 90.9 having temporarily dropped classical music

in favor of a news-talk format, Washington would have had no classical stations) only for Snyder to back out citing a "change in the radio climate" (a subsequent report by the Washington Post quoted an unnamed Bonneville executive as saying Snyder offered "50 percent more than {what the station} was worth"). Bonneville was then considering flipping WGMS to either pop or sports talk (separate from the failed Snyder deal); but enough of an outcry from the sizable (if aging) classical listeners led to WETA's board approving a motion that if WGMS were to drop classical music, WETA would immediately revert to its classical format. On January 22, 2007; WGMS played its final classical tune (fittingly, "With Tears of Grief" from Johann Sebastian Bach's "St. Matthew Passion") before program director Jim Allison announced the station's demise, though adding that Bonneville and WETA made the deal that led to WETA returning to a classical format starting at 8:00 p.m. that night. Bonneville donated the WGMS music library - 15,000 discs worth - to WETA and the rights to use the WGMS calls (WETA used it for a repeater station in Hagerstown, MD; with WETA also hiring many of the former WGMS staff). The 104.1 frequency eventually became an adult hits station under the WXGG calls (known as "George 104") for a short time before being renamed WPRS-FM 104.1 after being dealt to Urban One, which flipped the station to

an urban Gospel format under the "Praise 104" branding.

- WAXY-FM 105.9 in Fort Lauderdale, FL; which RKO owned from 1973-90, would up going to outdoor advertising firm Ackerley Communications. January 1992 saw WAXY drop the adult contemporary format used since 1979 in favor of a locally-staffed oldies station (following a stunting period where various versions of "Louie, Louie" were played in a loop). After an FCC ruling relaxing the number of radio stations that a single entity could own in a market; Clear Channel Communications acquired the station in 1996, renaming the station WBGG that September (the WAXY calls are currently held by an unrelated AM station in nearby Miami on the 790 position on the dial) and had flipped to the present classic rock format (the station is still owned by iHeartMedia; which Clear Channel changed its name to 2014). WBGG had carried Howard Stern in Fort Lauderdale from 1994-2004; when following an April 2004 fine of $495,000 by the FCC for allegations of airing indecent material from Stern's show (this was when the FCC briefly began enforcing indecency standards more strictly in the aftermath of the Super Bowl XXXVIII "wardrobe malfunction" during the halftime show), WBGG replaced the self-styled "King of All Media" with the duo of Paul & Young Ron (Paul Castronovo and "Young" Ron Brewer), which ran from 2004-16 on the morning drive before Brewer retired in

2016, with Castronovo continuing on as a solo host. Finally, from 2010-15, WBGG had been the flagship station for the NFL's Miami Dolphins; resuming that role beginning with the 2023 season as part of an agreement between iHeartMedia and the Dolphins (shared with WINZ-AM 940; as had been the case during the 2010-15 period)

- WFYR-FM 103.5 dropped the recently-acquired oldies format by October 30, 1989; with Summit Broadcasting electing to flip the station to adult contemporary. By 1991; WFYR was dealt to Major Broadcasting for $19 million, eventually flipping to a hard rock format and being renamed WWBZ (branded "The Blaze") on April 1, 1991. Major would not hold on to the station for long, selling to Evergreen Media in 1993 for $28 million. July 1994 would see WWBZ flip to an active rock format under the branding "Rock 103-5" and change calls again to WRCX, which - aided by hiring locally-based shock jock Mancow Muller - hit a new high in ratings. Evergreen merged with Chancellor Broadcasting in 1997; and by late June 1998 Mancow had departed, giving way to the Bob & Tom Show (a syndicated morning show hosted by Indianapolis-based Bob Kevoian & Tom Griswold). By late October 1998; WRCX changed formats once again, eventually flipping to a rhythmic oldies format (known as "The Beat") and changing calls once again, this time to WUBT. Chancellor

eventually merged with Capstar to form AMFM, Inc. and by 2000 was acquired by Clear Channel. In early 2001; the station adopted its present Top 40/CHR format, "Kiss 103.5" branding and WKSC call letters.

- WRKO-AM 680; upon its acquisition by Atlantic Ventures, bought up WHDH-AM 850 from New England Television Corporation (owner of WHDH-TV 7; which adopted the history of former RKO property WNAC as their own), followed by Atlantic Ventures merging with Stoner Broadcasting and Multi Market Communications in 1993 to form American Radio Systems; with that firm in August 1994 buying the intellectual property of the original WEEI-AM on the 590 dial from Back Bay Broadcasters (which had recently acquired the station from the NBA's Boston Celtics); resulting in WHDH changing calls to WEEI and flipping to sports radio; while the non-sports shows on the former WHDH-AM (including the "Skyway Patrol" traffic report branding; "The Rush Limbaugh Show" {from 1994-2010, when Clear Channel picked up the rights to Rush and "Coast to Coast AM" and moved it to WXKS-AM 1200. After both shows returned following the decision to flip WXKS to a comedy format in 2012, Rush was dropped from WRKO again in May 2015; this time citing rising costs} and Boston-based conservative talk show host Howie Carr's show) moving to WRKO (Carr would eventually clash with later WRKO

owner Entercom, drawing a 2010 suspension for disparagingly referencing Entercom on-air and ultimately leaving for WMEX in 2014 {eventually regaining distribution rights himself}, and while WRKO resumed broadcasts the following year, it was merely an affiliate vis-a-vis being his employer). Westinghouse (owner of CBS Radio) acquired American Radio Systems in September 1997, but as the combined company would have controlled 3 of the top 5 radio stations in the city and nearly 60% of ad revenue; CBS Radio was forced to divest 6 radio stations; 4 in the Boston area including WRKO and WEEI; with Entercom buying the Boston-area batch plus WWTM-AM 1440 in Worcester in August 1998. In early 2017; Entercom announced merger plans with CBS Radio; which once again saw WRKO be one of the stations (along with WKAF-FM 97.7 {which had recently flipped to an urban AC format}; WBZ-AM 1030; WBZ-FM 98.5 {more on WBZ-FM below; the flagship for the New England Patriots; both stations were prior to the sale co-owned with CBS O&O WBZ-TV 4}; Hot AC station WBMX-FM 104.1; Top 40 station WODS-FM 103.3 and classic rock station WZLX-FM 100.7 divested - with Entercom acquiring WRKO, WBZ-AM, WZLX and WKAF while spinning off WKOX-AM 1430 to the Ocean Stations Trust (WKOX, then a talk station, eventually was sold to Delmarva Educational Association and flipped to gospel music and a Spanish CHR

format before eventually settling on a Spanish-language Christian radio format).

- WROR-FM 98.5 was revamped in 1991 at WBMX (not to be confused with what's now WWBX on the 104.1 FM position), flipping to a Motown and Hot AC-dominant format (the station ended up exchanging call letters with the former WBMX, an AM station on the 640 AM position in Zeeland, MI which gained the WROR calls as a result). Following the Atlantic-Stoner-Multi Market merger that formed American Radio Systems; WBMX began phasing out the oldies in favor of more modern rock and ended up being acquired by CBS Radio as part of its acquisition of American Radio Systems. In 2009; CBS Radio announced that WBMX's call letters would change to WBZ (shared with sister stations WBZ-AM 1030 and WBZ-TV 4 and last used on an FM station when what's now WMJX {on the 106.7 position} switched to the present calls in 1981) and swapping formats with WBCN-FM 104.1; which adopted the WBMX call letters, Hot AC format and "Mix" branding while what was now WBZ-FM picked up the former WBCN's sports format (as "98.5 The Sports Hub") and becoming the flagship station for both the NHL's Boston Bruins and NFL's New England Patriots. As mentioned earlier; both of the WBZ radio stations were among those divested in the wake of the 2017 CBS Radio-Entercom merger; with Beasley Media

Group (owner of WMJX) agreeing in November of that year to trade WMJX to Entercom in exchange for WBZ-FM; officially becoming WBZ-FM's new owner on December 20, 2017

- WOR-AM 710 - following its sale - would largely remain unaffected by later changes until WOR was acquired by Clear Channel Communications in 2012 (in the process acquiring the remnants of a nationally-syndicated WOR Radio Network). 2014 saw a large number of changes for the station; acquiring the rights to Rush Limbaugh's and Sean Hannity's shows (both syndicated by Premiere Networks - owned by Clear Channel successor iHeartMedia) after moving from WABC-AM 770 (WOR as of 2022 continues to carry Hannity's show as well as the Clay Travis & Buck Sexton Show; which inherited the noon-3:00 p.m. timeslot following Rush Limbaugh's death in February 2021) while also hiring longtime WNBC-TV 4 sports anchor Len Berman and Tampa-area radio host Todd Schnitt in the mornings. Finally; WOR-AM would begin a 5-year deal as the flagship station for the New York Mets (much like one-time sister station WOR-TV 9 had been the home of over-the-air local TV broadcasts).
- WRKS-FM 98.7 (which adopted the calls in 1981 after being known as WXLO from 1972-81); following its sale to Atlanta-based Summit Communications Group in 1989, brought in several new personnel; including Ken "Spider" Webb, Jeff Foxx

and future talk-show host Wendy Williams as part of their new morning team, managing to hold onto the #1 slot with the hip hop-based format for several years in a tight battle with WBLS (the Webb, Foxx and Williams hirings were in response to former WRKS personality Mike Love {not to be confused with the Beach Boys member} to WBLS-FM 107.5); with the battle intensifying when - in the spring of 1994 - WQHT-FM 103.7 flipped from dance to hip-hop and poached Funk Master Flex away from WRKS; which responded by putting together a group known as the "Bomb Squad Mix Show" (named for its "bomb dropping" sound effect when new tracks were played) and gaining notoriety for playing the likes of The Notorious B.I.G. and Wu Tang Clan (years later, even when Clear Channel trademarked "Kiss FM" for its Top 40 stations in the late 1990s {based on Los Angeles station KIIS-FM 102.7}; the station was able to retain the "Kiss FM" branding via a grandfather clause). By December 1994; newly-relaxed laws permitting duopolies in radio led to WQHT's owner, Emmis Communications, acquiring WRKS to form New York's first FM duopoly. This soon led to a shift by WRKS to an urban AC format highlighting classic soul, brining in soul legends for imaging such as Barry White (who remained the face of the station until his death in 2003); and by 1995 adding another deep-voiced soul legend in Isaac Hayes for the morning and as

afternoon drive hosts the duo of husband-and-wife Nickolas Ashford and Valerie Simpson (known as Ashford & Simpson) along with hosting shows featuring the likes of Les Brown and Zapp member Roger Troutman. Over time, current songs gradually returned to WRKS before a mostly current R&B format was brought back in 1999 (with WBLS alumnus Frankie Crocker joining the station) and adding rap in 2000. WRKS reverted to its classic soul format in 2002 following the sign-on of WWPR-FM 105.1 before returning to Urban AC the following year. The classic soul/modern R&B format would remain until 2012; when YMF Media (owner of WBLS' parent company Inner City Broadcasting; YMF being owner by investor Ronald Burkle and NBA legend Magic Johnson) bought the intellectual property and trademarks of WRKS, resulting in Disney acquiring the 98.7 frequency and flipping it to ESPN Radio under the WEPN-FM call letters (YMF moved the former WRKS calls to the Jackson, MS ESPN Radio station), while WEPN-AM 1050 (which WEPN-FM originally simulcast for its first full months with ESPN) flipped to the Spanish-language ESPN Deportes format (WEPN-AM returned to English-language sports in 2019).

- WHBQ-AM 560, one of the last RKO stations to be sold, had fallen on hard times prior to its sale for reasons unrelated to RKO's shenanigans (the station, which in addition to being the first

station to play a recording of Elvis had also launched disc jockeys that went on to greater things such as Rick Dees {famous for his 1976 novelty song "Disco Duck"} and Wink Martindale {Martindale - who was showing the station around to friends upon noting the reaction colleague Dewey Phillips received for playing "That's All Right" - later famous as a game-show host, most notably the shows "Gambit" {1972-76 on CBS and a Las Vegas-themed 1980-81 NBC revival} and the 1978-85 revival of "Tic-Tac-Dough" {leaving the latter show to host the short-lived "Headline Chasers"}) beginning with the 1977 indictment and conviction of former WHBQ program director George Klein (on 4 counts of conspiracy related to stealing Arbitron diaries; with Klein attempting to inflate the station's ratings - ultimately serving a 60-day prison sentence). WHBQ-AM (by now a talk station) eventually wound up acquired by local company Flinn Broadcasting, which attempted to try oldies, country music and even late-night heavy metal before the station flipped to an all-sports format in 1992; affiliated first with CBS Sports Radio, then NBC Sports Radio and - when NBC ended full-time sports programming at the close of 2018 - FOX Sports Radio, including carrying Ole Miss Rebels football and men's basketball games.

- WNEV-TV 7, which inherited the frequency that had belonged to WNAC, made its official debut at 5:55 a.m. on the morning of

May 21, 1982 under the banner of “There’s a New Day Dawning”. WNEV’s operations under New England Television saw them adopt a strategy similar to WCVB a decade earlier in emphasizing local programming; most notably “Ready to Go”; a children’s variety show airing from 1987-91 and co-hosted by future Broadway actress and singer Liz Callaway; along with increasing the amount of minority on-air personnel (among them, anchor Lester Strong) and forming a news-sharing operation known as the New England News Exchange. By August 1987; WNEV dropped its “SE7EN” logo used since the license transfer to a dotted 7 look tying into WNEV acquiring the rights to drawings of Massachusetts’ state lottery around this time. On March 12, 1990; WNEV revived the present WHDH-TV call letters last used by the station replaced by WCVB; officially partnering with WHDH-AM 850. Trouble began soon afterwards; as NETV fell into debt and had to make cuts to local programming and dropping its 5:00 edition of News 7 by 1991. WHDH radio was sold to Atlantic Ventures in 1992; while a feud between majority owner David Mugar and minority owner Robert Kraft (later to become the owner of the New England Patriots) led to Kraft exercising an option requiring Mugar to buy Kraft’s shares for $25 million, on top of the nearly $100 million debt from 1986. End result: Mugar announced on April 22, 1993 that he was

selling WHDH to Sunbeam Television, owned by Ed Ansin - a native of Worcester whose company owned WSVN-TV 7; which had become a tabloid-style; news-intensive FOX affiliate after losing its previous NBC affiliation as part of a three-way swap in Miami that took place on New Year's Eve 1989. Upon the sale being finalized by late July; Ansin brought a downplayed version of the tabloid-style news format popularized at WSVN to WHDH; and the station (contrary to predictions) would soon rise to #1 for a time. As a result of WBZ's parent company, Westinghouse Broadcasting, entering a group affiliation deal with CBS (which it would eventually buy outright); CBS affiliate WHDH and NBC affiliate WBZ would trade affiliations effective on January 2, 1995, ending rumors that WHDH would follow WSVN in jumping to FOX; now officially a major network thanks to a stronger prime-time lineup and the recent acquisition of NFL coverage. WHDH and NBC's relationship - in spite of the problems between the Peacock and Sunbeam in Miami during the 1980s - seemed to go relatively well for a while; and by 2006 WLVI-TV 56 - affiliated with the newly-launched CW network - was bought by Sunbeam to form the area's 2nd duopoly. Then in 2015; NBCUniversal - which already owned New England Cable News; Comcast SportsNet New England and WNEU-TV 60; the market's Telemundo affiliate - announced it was considering WHDH

(whose NBC affiliation was set to expire in 2016); along with Meredith Corporation and Nexstar Broadcasting Group also mentioned as possible buyers (a Boston Globe article noted that in addition to the Sunbeam-NBC feud during the 1980s in Miami; NBC was also unhappy with WHDH's initial plan to have a 10:00 p.m. newscast instead of the short-lived "The Jay Leno Show" in 2009 before the station - under pressure from NBC - backed down). Ansin confirmed to the Boston Globe that he learned in September 2015 that NBC would yank its affiliation with WHDH while offering to buy it for $200 million - though Ansin insisted (a) that the minimum acceptable price was $500 million and (b) any sale of WHDH would include WLVI; going so far as to accuse NBC of "trying to steal our station". On January 7, 2016; NBC confirmed that it was moving its affiliation from WHDH effective New Year's Day 2017; Ansin - with support from Massachusetts Democratic Senator Ed Markey; who had been involved in broadcast-related matters for much of Markey's long career in Congress - countered by suggesting that the moving of NBC's affiliation violated a pledge to maintain over-the-air availability; a pledge made when cable company Comcast acquired NBCUniversal. That March; Sunbeam sued Comcast in a Massachusetts District Court, alleging violations of antitrust law - specifically charging that WNEU (the NBC-owned Telemundo

station) had an over-the-air signal covering 4 million fewer residents than WHDH; meaning viewers in those areas would need to buy cable or satellite; which would conveniently provide a big boost in business for Comcast’s cable outlets. On May 16; the court granted Comcast’s request to dismiss the suit. Ansin and Sunbeam briefly considered but ultimately decided against an appeal. NBC eventually announced plans to simulcast NBC Boston on both WNEU’s 60.2 digital sub channel and WBTS-LD 36, a low-power station in nearby Nashua, New Hampshire purchased in September 2016 while leasing a sub channel of WMFP-TV 62 until 2018; when NBC bought WYCN-CD 10. By 2019; WYCN and WBTS swapped call letters. As for WHDH, it eventually became a news-intensive independent station similar to its FOX-affiliated Miami sister station, while adding ABC to its 7.2 subchannel after longtime ABC affiliate WPLG-TV 10 decided to go independent in August 2025.

- WWOR-TV 9, upon its sale to MCA and renaming, dropped the long-running “dotted 9” in favor of a red 9 on a temporary basis before radically updating the station’s on-air appearance; with a “venetian blinds” 9 logo and new movie intros that could have passed for a network intro. WWOR’s newscasts were rebranded, first as “The News at Ten” (reflecting their new time-slot) before later being simply “9 News” while scrapping all religious shows

save for the Sunday Mass, cutting “Romper Room” to 30 minutes and airing at 6:00 a.m. while adding cartoons and stronger syndicated shows (including by 1988; adding reruns of top-rated NBC sitcom “The Cosby Show”) along with adding original shows such as children’s show “Steampipe Alley”; “9 Broadcast Plaza” (named after the station’s Secaucus studio; this series - whose hosts included at one point future “Today” host Matt Lauer - was originally named “People Are Talking” and would eventually be retooled as “The Richard Bey Show”); “The Morton Downey Jr. Show” and even “The Howard Stern Show”). 1989 saw WWOR - like fellow superstations such as fellow New York-area station WPIX-TV 11 and Chicago’s WGN-TV 9 - end up having to adapt to the FCC’s new SyndEx (syndicated exclusivity rights) rules requiring cable providers to black out syndicated shows on out-of-market stations where local stations carried the rights; resulting in Eastern Microwave (which handled WWOR’s satellite uplink) bringing in replacement shows that no station had exclusive rights to; which in WWOR’s case meant mainly shows from MCA parent company Universal; Quinn Martin or The Christian Science Monitor’s service; with the separate satellite and cable subscriber feed (known as the WWOR EMI Service) launching effective January 1, 1990. By fall 1990; WWOR began using the branding “Universal 9”, but this would be short-lived as

Matsushita Electric; a Japanese-based electronics company (now Panasonic Holdings Corporation after its most prominent brand) acquired MCA that November - a problem considering that FCC regulations forbid foreign companies from owning more than 25% of a station’s interest. MCA would subsequently spin off WWOR to a separate company called Pinelands, Inc. on New Year’s Day 1990. In 1992; Disney agreed to sell KCAL to Pinelands in exchange for a 45% ownership stake (which would have reunited KCAL and WWOR); only for Pinelands to instead agree to a bid from BHC Communications, a division of Chris-Craft Industries which made WWOR a sister station to rival Los Angeles independent KCOP-TV 13 instead. BHC’s independent stations would align with the Prime Time Entertainment Network block in 1993 but soon after, Chris-Craft and Paramount (newly acquired by Viacom) partnered to form United Paramount Network, or UPN, which launched on January 16, 1995; with WWOR being the flagship station, retiring the venetian blinds 9 in favor of a funkier-looking 9 loosely based on the RKO-era “dotted 9”. With only a month's notice, Advance Entertainment Corporation - which had recently acquired WWOR's satellite distribution rights from EMI - canceled the national satellite uplink; whose transponder space was bought by Discovery Communications for their recently-launched Animal Planet

channel. The controversy over the cancellation led to National Programming Service, LLC providing a satellite-exclusive uplink once again (notably, this meant that for the first time since 1990, the WWOR local and satellite feeds were identical). This proved short-lived; as the WWOR uplink would be dropped in 1999 in favor of the newly-launched PAX TV (now Ion); though Dish would retain the New York feed as part of a superstations package except in areas where the SyndEx laws were used by the local UPN (or MyNetwork after 2006) affiliate to block the feed. Chris-Craft - which had sold its half of UPN to Viacom shortly after Viacom acquired CBS - would announce they were getting out of television in 2000 and sell all of its stations. Viacom would lose its bid to buy the stations as a group to FOX Television Stations; which won the bidding with a $5.5 billion deal in August of 2000. As a result, with the FCC having recently legalized duopolies, this made WWOR a sister station of FOX flagship WNYW-TV 5. The deal closed in the fall of 2001 (having been delayed several days as a result of the 9/11 attacks; worth noting is that all of the local New York City stations held their main transmitters in the Twin Towers, though WCBS-TV 2; unlike the others, kept a backup transmitter at the Empire State Building; resulting in WCBS being the only major local station operating at full capacity in the Big Apple). By 2001; FOX began gradually integrating WNYW and

WWOR's operations, dumping the shows with weaker ratings on WWOR while helping themselves to some of WWOR's stronger programming. By 2004; FOX announced plans to close 9 Broadcast Plaza as a main studio and move operations to WNYW's FOX Television Center in Manhattan while retaining the WWOR facility in Secaucus as a satellite relay station, only for New Jersey Democratic Congressman Steve Rothman (representing the 9th district; which includes Secaucus) and Democratic Senator Frank Lautenberg, both of whom pointed out that WWOR's license dating to the 1983 legislation during RKO General's fight with the FCC required WWOR to have its main studio in New Jersey and that it emphasize coverage of New Jersey news (had the full merger succeeded; there was a strong possibility of a significant downsizing of WWOR's news department that would have made it impossible to cover New Jersey news adequately). By 2006; the announcement of UPN and the WB merging to form the CW network led to News Corporation launching MyNetworkTV; which was touted as a sixth network but in practice was closer to a consolation prize for the stations who were turned down for the new CW (in the New York market; the CW would go to WPIX-TV 11, the area WB affiliate), and the day after the CW's announcement on January 25; all FOX-owned UPN affiliates ceased promoting UPN programs and

stripped all references to the lame-duck network (by April; WWOR slapped the word "my" in the space of the logo where the UPN logo had been). More trouble came when the first two petitions to deny WWOR's license were filed in 2007; and per a 2009 complaint filed and claims by Sen. Lautenberg, WWOR was failing to meet its public interest obligations, with Lautenberg questioning the truthfulness of its application to renew the license, with WWOR also being accused of failing to report reduction in local news coverage and not being truthful about the number of employees based in Secaucus. By February 2011; an investigation into News Corporation was launched by the FCC to determine if the company lied about WWOR's news operations and programming during the license review. Had the review confirmed any wrongdoing, News Corporation's penalties would have included being stripped of the licenses of both WWOR and WNYW. The next year, Lautenberg called for an investigation into the possibility of the FCC relaxing rules on media consolidation, charging that News Corporation owning both WNYW and the New York Post "has not served New Jersey well". Eventually, all of News Corporation's television properties would be spun off to a new company named 21st Century Fox in June 2013; with WWOR shuttering the news department entirely by July 2013 in favor of a tabloid-style show called "Chasing New Jersey", much to the

chagrin of New Jersey Democratic Senator Bob Menendez, who led the charge criticizing News Corporation regarding the WWOR license battle following Frank Lautenberg's death on June 3, 2013; while Frank Pallone, the Democratic Congressman representing New Jersey's 6th district since 1988, and the New Jersey Legislature outright called for WWOR's license to be revoked. Despite this; in August 2014, the FCC renewed the station's license. By 2018; Menendez and junior Senator Cory Booker (elected in 2014 to succeed Lautenberg) - again citing a failure to "live up to its federal mandate" to cover news in New Jersey - continued calling for WWOR to lose its license, but in 2018 the FCC gave WWOR a 10-year license renewal. One of the other conditions of WWOR's license renewal during the 1983 RKO round of battles was that the studio had to be physically based in New Jersey, but in 2017 the FCC repealed the Main Studio Rule that would have required WWOR continue operations in Secaucus. Thus, in February 2018; FOX Television Stations sold 9 Broadcast Plaza to Hartz Mountain Industries, the developer of the office park where the building was located for a paltry $4.05 million, resulting in WWOR's operations being consolidated with WNYW in Manhattan and the former 9 Broadcast Plaza being demolished by the end of 2019.

- WHBQ-TV 13, the last TV station to be sold off by RKO General,

was acquired by Adams Communications in 1990. By 1994; Adams was in severe financial trouble, selling the Memphis ABC affiliate to Communications Corporation of America, which soon afterwards sold the station to News Corporation (parent company of FOX. FOX - which had recently gained the rights to the NFL's NFC package beginning in 1994 - had purchased the team due to Memphis proposing it be chosen for an expansion team tentatively named the Hound Dogs {that team never materialized, though Tennessee would become the home of an NFL team when the former Houston Oilers {an AFC team} moved to the Volunteer State in 1997 {playing that season in Memphis' Liberty Bowl while what's now Nissan Stadium - originally Adelphia Coliseum - in Nashville was completed. The Oilers would be renamed the Titans when they moved to the new stadium in 1999}); with FOX having to run the station as an ABC affiliate until WHBQ's ABC affiliation deal expired on December 1, 1995 (similar to the Birmingham, AL situation with WBRC-TV 6); with previous FOX affiliate WPTY-TV 24 taking the abandoned ABC affiliation (though unlike most of the former Big 3 stations acquired by or affiliating with FOX; WHBQ was one of the few to carry the popular FOX Kids block). In 2007; News Corporation put 9 of its stations, including WHBQ-TV, up for sale. Eight of those went to Local TV LLC; but they couldn't acquire WHBQ due to

owning local CBS affiliate WREG-TV 5 and FCC rules disallowing duopolies between 2 of the 4 highest-rated stations in a market. With the only other buyers willing to pay what News Corporation was looking for being Newport Television (owner of ABC affiliate WPTY and WLMT-TV 30; the original Memphis FOX affiliate from FOX's sign-on in 1986-90 and the local CW affiliate) and Raycom Media (owner of NBC affiliate WMC-TV 5); WHBQ was taken off the market. In 2014; FOX traded WHBQ and Boston O&O WFXT-TV 25 to Cox Media Group in exchange for a station that FOX had long coveted: San Francisco-area FOX affiliate KTVU-TV 2 (long the largest non-O&O affiliate) and independent sister station KICU-TV 36. In 2019; Apollo Global Management snapped up Cox Media Group along with Northwest Broadcasting. In 2022; WHBQ-TV and 17 other Cox stations were sold to Imagicomm Broadcasting (a division of religious-turned-general entertainment {predominantly Westerns} channel INSP) as Cox attempted to meet regulatory requirements in the event of a proposed merger with Tegna and Standard Media (the planned merger was turned over to an administrative law judge in February 2023; and since the hearing process would have run longer than the deadline to close the deal, said merger deal was scrapped on May 22, 2023).